

# Teachers' notes

## Looking at the painting

**One way to look at the painting is to divide it up into sections**

### • The left side

Upon the balcony is a famous biographer called Lytton Strachey. He is waiting to receive two rather fancifully-dressed guests who have arrived and are about to enter the house from below.

### • The right side

By contrast on the right side there is a rather sad-looking woman staring out of the window, resting her head in her hand. Behind her you can see a bird in a cage. On the floor above there is a cat on the windowsill, and through the open window on the top floor you can just see a radio. Washing is blowing on the line and the upstairs curtains seem to be moving, too. Beside the flats there is a dark coloured tree with only a few leaves growing.

### • In the foreground

You can just see the bonnet of a Rolls Royce. Two guardsmen in their bright uniforms are taking their girlfriends into the park. They are by a flower-seller who is holding a bunch of lily-of-the-valley, which only comes out in spring. The flower-seller is

caged in by the railings, which look rather militaristic – and reflect the lines on the opposite side.

### • In the park

Beneath the statue there are three children. The boy is holding a bat and some stumps and is standing by a younger girl. Another girl is throwing breadcrumbs to the swan and her cygnets. Behind them are two people on a park bench who appear to be holding hands. In front of the pond there are two figures lying down – one of them is reading a newspaper. If you look carefully at their feet you can see that they are lying in exactly the same way. In the far distance are a bandstand, trees and a block of flats.

### • Colours

The guardsmen's red uniforms stand out as the most dominant colours right in the centre. This is balanced by the darkness of the right-hand side and the figures in black on the left. The guardsmen's colour is also balanced by the darkness of the flower-seller's coat. The rest of the park is full of the colours of spring.

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